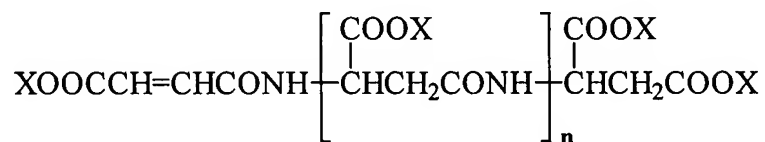


## CLAIM LISTING

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Original) A poly-β-carboxyacrylamide polymer of formula (I)



(I)

wherein

X is an alkaline metal or a substituent capable of bringing about an exchange reaction with a salt of an alkaline earth metal,  
said polymer having a ponderal average molecular weight greater than or equal to 2,000.

2. (Original) A polymer according to claim 1, wherein said polymer of formula (I) has a ponderal average molecular weight ranging between 5,000 and 50,000.
3. (Original) A polymer according to claim 1, wherein said polymer of formula (I) has a ponderal average molecular weight ranging between 10,000 and 30,000.
4. (Original) A polymer according to claim 1, wherein X is Na.

5. (Original) A process for preparing a polymer as described in claim 1, comprising the step of polymerisation in an aqueous phase of a maleate of ammonium and of an alkaline metal or a precursor thereof in the presence of a chain terminating compound in the form of a maleate completely salified with an alkaline metal or with a substituent capable of bringing about an exchange reaction with a salt of an alkaline earth metal, at a temperature of between 90 and 175°C and a molar ratio between chain terminating compound and monomer to be polymerised equal to or greater than 1 : 8.

6. (Original) A process according to claim 5, wherein the compound of formula (I) is prepared by means of polymerisation in the aqueous phase of a maleate of sodium and ammonium in the presence of a chain terminating compound in the form of a maleate salified with an alkaline metal selected from lithium, sodium and potassium.

7. (Original) A process according to claim 6, wherein the monomer subjected to polymerisation is maleate of sodium and ammonium and the chain terminating compound is disodium maleate.

8. (Original) A process according to claim 5, wherein the reaction temperature is between 125 and 150°C.

9. (Original) A polymer obtainable according to the process described in claim 5.

10. (Original) The use of the polymer described in claim 1 as a sequestering agent in relation to the alkaline earth metals in the form of salts.

11. (Original) The use according to claim 10 as a sequestering agent for calcium and magnesium in the form of bicarbonate, chloride and sulphate.

12. (Currently amended) The use according to claim ~~[[11]]~~ 10 as a sequestering agent for calcium in the form of calcium bicarbonate.

Claim 13 (Canceled).

14. (Currently amended) A detergent composition ~~characterised in that it comprises an effective amount of~~ comprising the polymer described in claim 1.

15. (Currently amended) A collutory composition ~~characterised in that it comprises an effective amount of~~ comprising the polymer described in ~~any one of~~ claim 1.

16. (Currently amended) A decalcifying device ~~characterised in that it comprises~~ comprising ~~[[a]]~~ the polymer ~~[[as]]~~ described in ~~any one of~~ claim 1.